

PRESS RELEASE

# Baker-Polito Administration Announces Second Annual Statewide Stem Week for Students

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Executive Office of Education

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**BOSTON** — In an effort to boost students' interest and awareness of STEM education, the Baker-Polito Administration today announced the second annual statewide STEM Week for students across the Commonwealth will be held from October 21 to 25, 2019.

The Administration is asking educators at all grade levels to participate by planning lessons, events, field trips, and activities focused on science, technology, engineering and math throughout the week. The Executive Office of Education and the STEM Advisory Council will launch a public awareness campaign entitled “See Yourself in STEM” aimed at encouraging more young people to see themselves engaged in STEM fields and helping them understand the diverse job opportunities in industries across the Commonwealth.

“Introducing more students to the educational and occupation possibilities associated with STEM is critical to the future of the Commonwealth, and ensuring all students have opportunities to study STEM is a priority for our Administration,” **said Governor Charlie Baker.** “We look forward to another successful STEM week for students across Massachusetts.”

“STEM Week 2019 will showcase just how integral advancements in science, technology, engineering and math are to our daily lives,” **said Lt. Governor Karyn Polito, who co-chairs the STEM Advisory Council.** “We look forward to building on the success of last year’s STEM Week by working with schools across the Commonwealth so students can in fact ‘See Themselves in STEM.’”

Strengthening STEM education in the Commonwealth’s K-12 schools is a priority of the Baker-Polito Administration. Lt. Governor Karyn Polito co-chairs the STEM Advisory Council along with Congressman Joseph P. Kennedy III and Jeffrey Leiden, chief executive officer of Vertex Pharmaceuticals. The STEM Advisory Council is appointed by the Governor and includes education and business leaders in STEM industries that work to promote STEM education, partnerships among industries and schools, and internships for students.

Employment in STEM-related occupations is projected to grow to more than 9 million jobs nationwide between 2012 and 2022 – that’s an increase of about 1 million more jobs over 2012 employment levels, according to data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. For Massachusetts – which has the most technology jobs per capita in the country – this creates both economic and societal challenges.

“If a student cannot envision a career in STEM fields, classroom training will only take them so far. Throughout this year’s STEM Week, students will be able to accelerate their

STEM career pathway, gain experience in the jobs they may someday hold and be inspired by professions they did not even know were within their reach,” **said Congressman Joseph Kennedy III.**

“Developing the next generation of leaders in STEM is all about capturing the imagination of kids early and showing them how much fun hands-on science can be,” **said Dr. Jeffrey Leiden, Chairman, President and CEO of Vertex.** “STEM week and the year-round STEM programs we run at Vertex are fantastic opportunities for students to do just that - have fun with science and explore all of the possibilities a future career in STEM can hold for them.”

STEM Week is a collaborative effort between the STEM Advisory Council, which is working to generate interest from the business community for STEM Week activities, and the state’s Regional STEM Networks, which are planning and coordinating activities with educators, community leaders, and business partners.

Last October, the Administration held the inaugural statewide STEM Week in Massachusetts. It was a huge success with more than 500 events across the Commonwealth with thousands of students involved. Schools, non-profit organizations, colleges, museums, and business partners all participated in hosting and organizing STEM Week events for students ranging from pre-school aged to college.

Despite the abundance of jobs in science, technology, engineering and math, just one in six American high school seniors say they are interested in studying STEM in college.

The need for STEM graduates particularly impacts Massachusetts because more than 40 percent of all employment in the Commonwealth revolves around innovation industries such as clean energy, information technology, defense and advanced manufacturing, according to the Massachusetts’ Plan for Excellence in STEM Education.

Women are particularly underrepresented in STEM fields. Although women account for about 47 percent of the workforce in the United States, they hold only 25 percent of computer and mathematical occupations, and just 15 percent of engineering jobs.

“We are a state that depends on the intellectual capital of our people and relies on the strong foundation we have built around STEM,” **Education Secretary James Peyser said.** “It is vital we bring more women into STEM fields, not only for their success, but for the economic security of the Commonwealth. If we don’t act with more urgency around diversifying the fields, there is no way for us to demographically meet the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.”

“From our new *MassTeach* grant to build diversity in the ranks of STEM teachers, to our STEM Starter Academies and Early College opportunities to draw K12 students into STEM courses, our public colleges and universities are working hard to make sure that all students are prepared to succeed in STEM majors and careers,” **said Carlos E. Santiago, Massachusetts Commissioner of Higher Education.** “The annual STEM Week helps us promote STEM opportunities at all of our community college, state university and UMass campuses.”

“STEM Week provides an opportunity for students to explore and discover the many STEM-related disciplines through engaging, hands-on learning experiences that are relevant to the real world,” **Elementary and Secondary Education Commissioner Jeffrey C. Riley said.** “This exposure is a powerful way to ignite interest and inspire students to see themselves in STEM, particularly for students from communities that are underrepresented in the STEM fields.”

There are many ways for educators to participate in STEM Week. For example, schools and districts can:

- Engage pre-kindergarten students in age-appropriate week-long STEM experiences, including exploring nature, animal life and plants.
- Implement a week-long immersive STEM experience for middle schoolers, in partnership with i2Learning ([www.i2learning.org](http://www.i2learning.org) (<http://www.i2learning.org>))
- Showcase high-impact, project-based STEM curriculum, like Project Lead the Way ([www.pltw.org](http://www.pltw.org) (<http://www.pltw.org>))
- Sponsor coding activities to promote participation in Hour of Code ([hourofcode.com/us](http://hourofcode.com/us))

- Arrange a field trip to a research lab or factory floor, or invite employers to talk with high schoolers about internship opportunities through MA STEM@Work, part of Connecting Activities ([www.massconnecting.org](http://www.massconnecting.org) (<http://www.massconnecting.org>))
- Bring in local college students to talk about their experiences participating in a STEM Starter Academy ([www.mass.edu/stem/initiatives/stemacademy.asp](https://www.mass.edu/stem/initiatives/stemacademy.asp) (<https://www.mass.edu/stem/initiatives/stemacademy.asp>))
- Organize a webinar to inform girls about Mass TLC’s annual Technovation competition ([www.masstlc.org/technovation](https://www.masstlc.org/technovation-info/) (<https://www.masstlc.org/technovation-info/>))
- Invite manufacturing/engineering students from a local vocational-technical program to put on a robotics demonstration
- Highlight potential college courses and majors to prospective community college students through STEM Starter Academies. The STEM Starter Academy is an initiative of the 15 Massachusetts community colleges to engage, recruit and graduate significantly more students in STEM programs that lead to careers

During STEM Week, members of the Baker-Polito Administration and the STEM Advisory Council will visit classrooms and other school-related STEM activities that showcase successful programs and raise awareness about what is happening in STEM education around the Commonwealth.

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## Executive Office of Education (/orgs/executive-office-of-education)

From pre-school to post-secondary education, the Executive Office of Education works to connect all Massachusetts residents with an education that creates opportunities.

While Massachusetts' students rank first in the nation on many educational measures, the Executive Office of Education strives to strengthen the foundations of education reform, empower schools and educators, and develop pathways to college and careers so all students in the Commonwealth can succeed, regardless of their zip code.

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